

## House Republican Press Release

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### **Rep. Hetherington Joins Effort for Special Session to Protect Property Rights**



#### *Legislator One of First to Request Legislature Convene to Reform Eminent Domain*

State Rep. John Hetherington, R-125th, New Canaan, Wilton, who has called for reform of state eminent domain laws on government taking of private property, has signed a petition formally calling the legislature into special session on the topic.

Rep. Hetherington said the session is aimed at adopting a moratorium against taking people's property for private development as well as making permanent changes in state law to protect property rights in the future.

Calling itself into session is an unusual action, which legislators are initiating because the leadership has not acted on this issue. By the petition process, a majority of legislators themselves can call the legislature into special session.

"It is one of the most basic rights in America's democratic system that people have a right to own their own home," said Rep. Hetherington. "When government can take property away for a private developer to build a hotel is an alarming use of government power. As representatives of the people, the legislature needs to limit that power now."

She added, "There is a distinction between taking property for a public purpose such as a school and taking someone's house to turn it over to a developer."

The issues arises from a June 23 U.S. Supreme Court decision by a 5-4 vote that authorized the City of New London to acquire private homes by eminent domain to allow development of a hotel and conference center.

On June 28, Rep. Hetherington and Republican colleagues voted to restrict the use of eminent domain under such circumstances. The measure was defeated along party lines by a vote of 50 - 82.

Rep. Hetherington said a bill to reform the eminent domain law also was offered during the 2005 legislative session. However, the measure never came up for a vote during the

regular session. Rep. Hetherington and Republican colleagues offered it as an amendment to a budget bill in the legislature's June 28 special session.

Rep. Hetherington serves the 125th Assembly District of New Canaan and Wilton in the state House of Representatives.